Shortage of Fertilizers

503. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the "Statesman" (Calcutta) on 7th November, 1998 captioned 'BURDWAN POTATO CROP HIT BY FERTILIZER SCARCITY';

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether similar shortages are being faced in other areas of potato cultivation in West Bengal; and

(d) if so, the action taken so far to make up the deficit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Muriate of Potash (MOP) is a decontrolled fertiliser and, therefore, Government of India do not control its distribution and movement. The Government of West Bengal is keeping constant touch with the various importers of MOP for ensuring its supply and availability. According to the reports received from the State Government, even though shortage of MOP was experienced in the first to third weeks of November, 1998, the situation has now improved.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Drought situation in Orissa

504. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI:
SHRI ANANTA SETHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the severe draught situation prevailing in Orissa;

(b) if so, the total loss of Rabi and Kharif crops sustained by the farmers in the State due to the prevailing drought this year; and

(c) the details of the aid and assistance extended by the Centre to combat the drought situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Government has reported that 10.66 lakh hectares of Kharif paddy was affected and 1.77 lakh hectares area could not be covered. Damage to Rabi crops has not so far been reported by the State Government.

(c) The entire Central share of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 1998-99 amounting to Rs. 40.77 crore has already been released to the State. A Memorandum received from the State Government for assistance from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) is under process.

Production of Onions

505. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) total production of onions during the last three years;

(b) shortfall in production of onions during 1997-98 and anticipated shortfall in 1998-99 alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the measures Government have taken to boost the production of onions;

(d) whether Agriculture Ministry had requested Commerce Ministry to stop exports of the onions or to facilitate import of onions to check domestic prices;